



1233 Second Avenue
Ground Floor
New York, NY 10065



T 212 308 2210
F 212 888 7140
eisny.org

When times are tough, it can be hard to pay rent by yourself, especially in NYC. Maybe it's time to look for someone to share your rent with...

If you lease an apartment and you want a roommate, these are some steps to take to ensure that you are in a good position as a roommate and as a law-abiding citizen:

- 1) In almost all cases you are allowed to share your apartment with a roommate.
- 2) Consider the type of roommate that you are looking for:
 - What kind of schedule complements yours? Are you are busy during the day or at night?
 - Would you mind if they have guests over regularly?
 - What kind of dietary concerns or restrictions are you willing to accommodate?
 - Will your apartment be furnished or unfurnished?
 - Are you open to new decorations?
 - How do you want to share your common rooms and storage spaces?
 - What level of noise is acceptable?
 - How important is cleanliness and tidiness to you?
- 3) Begin searching for a roommate.
 - Word of mouth is the best form of advertising! Tell people in your network that you are looking for a roommate. It might also be helpful to post an advertisement on Craig's List and other public advertising interfaces.
 - In your post, give a complete profile of your ideal roommate. Be honest and include items that will be important to you- Give this some serious thought.
 - Interview a potential roommate.
 - It is best to meet in a **public place** before taking them to see your apartment.
 - Ask questions about the issues that are most important to you.
 - Why did you leave your last apartment?
 - What do you do for a living?
 - Get a general sense of the potential roommate and see if you get along. Take time to ask questions!
 - More than anything **trust your gut instinct!** Don't be afraid to say, "There is something off about that person and I don't know if I should share my living space with them."

Helping New Yorkers Stay Put Since 1984



1233 Second Avenue
Ground Floor
New York, NY 10065



T 212 308 2210
F 212 888 7140
eisny.org

4) Make a roommate agreement (take a sample from us). It is very important to have written document before you move in with a roommate. If drafting your own agreement be sure to include information about:

- **Payment:** How much of the rent are you responsible for, how much is the roommate responsible for?
- **Security deposit:** Your landlord may require a person to put down a security payment. Maybe you can require an additional security deposit for yourself (just in case your roommate damages the apartment, you can have some backup money to fix it).
- **Who to pay:** Should the roommate pay you or the landlord directly? (Check with your landlord to see if separate checks are permitted; many times landlords require one total rent payment.)
- **Who will occupy each bedroom?**
- **Utilities:** Who is responsible for the utility payments or how will you divide them? Sometimes it is better to assign each utility to an individual to avoid confusion. Make sure you and your roommate are clear who is paying for what and when payments are due.
- **Set a firm date to pay each other back:** Maybe the first of the month will be a time to settle the difference between utility payments and other expenses.
- **Food:** Are you going to share food or keep it separate? If you decide to keep food separate, set aside a specific space for you and a different space for your roommate.
- **Make copies of your roommate's personal identification:** Get some emergency contact information from them as well.
- **Include provisions for a problematic roommate:** If you have a roommate that is not working out, you should be able to terminate their lease. Consider what process you want to undertake in the case that the roommate needs to leave.
- **Most importantly, create an environment of open communication.** Problems should be resolved as soon as possible. Arguments generally occur when problems are bottled up.

Having a roommate can be a great experience if you are prepared. When money is tight, getting a roommate can be the solution to expensive NYC rent!

Helping New Yorkers Stay Put Since 1984